

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1566

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 11, 2021

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-  
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Safe Interactions Act  
5 of 2021”.

**6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

1                   (1) Individuals with disabilities are 2.5 times  
2 more likely to be victims of violent crime.

3                   (2) Individuals with disabilities are 3 times  
4 more likely to be victims of a serious crime.

5                   (3) Individuals with disabilities make up be-  
6 tween one-third and one-half of all individuals killed  
7 by law enforcement officers.

8 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

9                   The purposes of this Act are to—

10                  (1) authorize the Secretary to award competi-  
11 tive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to  
12 administer enhanced training programs to law en-  
13 forcement officers who may encounter or provide  
14 services to covered individuals, including—

15                  (A) individuals with mental health disabil-  
16 ities, including schizophrenia;

17                  (B) individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind,  
18 hard of hearing, or blind, are autistic, or have  
19 other intellectual or developmental disabilities;

20                  (C) older individuals with dementia or  
21 other cognitive impairments; or

22                  (D) individuals with any other disabilities  
23 or chronic health condition;

24                  (2) support, not replace, other specialized law  
25 enforcement officer training; and

(B) reduce incidences of violence between law enforcement officers and covered individuals;

13 (i) those individuals; and

17                   (D) increase the knowledge of law enforcement  
18 officers of community resources available for covered  
19 individuals to ultimately limit interactions with law  
20 enforcement officers.

## 21 SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

22 In this Act:

1                             (2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered  
2 individual” means—

- 3                                 (A) an older individual; or  
4                                 (B) an individual with a disability.

5                             (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
6 ty” means a nonprofit disability organization that  
7 has formed a partnership with a law enforcement  
8 agency or a consortium of law enforcement agencies  
9 to administer enhanced training programs to law en-  
10 forcement officers of the agency or agencies on how  
11 to interact with covered individuals.

12                            (4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”  
13 has the meaning given the term “Indian tribe” in  
14 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-  
15 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

16                            (5) INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.—The term  
17 “individual with a disability” means any individual  
18 who has a disability, as defined in section 3 of the  
19 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.  
20 12102).

21                            (6) INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM.—The term  
22 “initial training program” means a mandatory train-  
23 ing program offered to new law enforcement officers  
24 during their orientation under section 5(d)(1)(A).

1                             (7) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term  
2         “law enforcement officer” means any officer, agent,  
3         or employee of a State, political subdivision of a  
4         State, or Indian Tribe—

5                             (A) authorized by law or by a government  
6         agency to engage in or supervise the prevention,  
7         detection, or investigation of any violation of  
8         criminal law; or

9                             (B) authorized by law to supervise sen-  
10         tenced criminal offenders.

11                            (8) NONPROFIT DISABILITY ORGANIZATION.—  
12         The term “nonprofit disability organization” means  
13         a nonprofit organization—

14                             (A) that serves covered individuals; and  
15                             (B)(i) that is operated by a board of which  
16         the majority of members are covered individ-  
17         uals;

18                             (ii) that has an advisory panel of which the  
19         majority of members are covered individuals; or  
20                             (iii) the majority of the employees of which  
21         are covered individuals.

22                            (9) OLDER INDIVIDUAL.—The term “older indi-  
23         vidual” has the meaning given the term in section  
24         102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C.  
25         3002).

1                             (10) PARTNER ACADEMY.—The term “partner  
2                             academy”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-  
3                             ceives a covered grant, means a law enforcement  
4                             training academy with which the eligible entity part-  
5                             ners to administer an initial training program, as  
6                             described in section 5(b)(1).

7                             (11) PARTNER AGENCY.—The term “partner  
8                             agency”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-  
9                             ceives a covered grant, means the law enforcement  
10                            agency with which the eligible entity partners, or  
11                            that is a member of a consortium with which the eli-  
12                            gible entity partners, to administer enhanced train-  
13                            ing programs to law enforcement officers of the  
14                            agency on how to interact with covered individuals.

15                            (12) REFRESHER TRAINING PROGRAM.—The  
16                             term “refresher training program” means a training  
17                             program offered to existing law enforcement officers  
18                             under section 5(d)(1)(B).

19                            (13) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”  
20                             means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

21                           **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

22                            (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award com-  
23                             petitive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to ad-  
24                             minister enhanced training programs to law enforcement

1 officers who may encounter or provide services to covered  
2 individuals.

3 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a cov-  
4 ered grant shall submit to the Secretary an application  
5 that—

6 (1)(A) identifies a law enforcement training  
7 academy with which the eligible entity will partner  
8 to administer an initial training program; and

9 (B) includes a memorandum of understanding  
10 entered into between the eligible entity and the law  
11 enforcement training academy;

12 (2) describes the training program curriculum,  
13 which shall include training on how to interact with,  
14 identify, approach, and communicate with covered  
15 individuals that is provided, as of the date of sub-  
16 mission of the application—

17 (A) by the partner academy to new law en-  
18 forcement officers; or

19 (B) by any partner agency to existing law  
20 enforcement officers;

21 (3) describes the learning objectives of the  
22 training programs that the eligible entity will admin-  
23 ister using the grant;

24 (4) describes the activities that will be carried  
25 out under the grant;

1                         (5) includes a timeline of the activities de-  
2                         scribed in paragraph (4); and

3                         (6) demonstrates expertise in training related to  
4                         covered individuals.

5                         (c) PREFERENCES.—In awarding covered grants, the  
6                         Secretary shall ensure—

7                         (1) geographic diversity of grant recipients, in-  
8                         cluding grant recipients that serve rural localities;  
9                         and

10                        (2) that the training funded by the grant is  
11                         provided to multiple levels of law enforcement agen-  
12                         cies, including local, county, State, and Tribal agen-  
13                         cies.

14                         (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

15                         (1) MANDATORY USES.—An eligible entity that  
16                         receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds  
17                         to—

18                         (A) modify the training provided by the  
19                         partner academy to new law enforcement offi-  
20                         cers of each partner agency so that the acad-  
21                         emy provides not fewer than 8 hours of training  
22                         on topics such as how to interact with, identify,  
23                         approach, and communicate with covered indi-  
24                         viduals and applicable Federal civil rights laws,

1                   including not fewer than 4 hours of interactive  
2                   learning taught by covered individuals; and

3                   (B) develop and implement an enhanced  
4                   training program for existing law enforcement  
5                   officers of each partner agency on safe, effec-  
6                   tive, and respectful interactions with covered in-  
7                   dividuals—

8                   (i) that includes—

9                         (I) awareness of and education  
10                      about covered individuals, including—

11                         (aa) individuals with mental  
12                      health disabilities, including  
13                      schizophrenia;

14                         (bb) individuals who are  
15                      deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing,  
16                      or blind, are autistic, or have  
17                      other intellectual or develop-  
18                      mental disabilities;

19                         (cc) older individuals with  
20                      dementia or other cognitive im-  
21                      pairments; and

22                         (dd) individuals with any  
23                      other disabilities or chronic  
24                      health condition;

(II) escalation avoidance and de-escalation techniques to be used when interacting with covered individuals, including procedures a law enforcement officer should follow to ensure the health and safety of a covered individual; and

(III) communication strategies to be used when interacting with covered individuals, including individuals who do not use speech to communicate;

(ii) that utilizes—

(I) instructors who are covered individuals; or

(II) guest instructors or speakers who are covered individuals; and

(iii) in which each law enforcement officer participates not less frequently than 4 hours every year.

(2) OPTIONAL USES.—An eligible entity that receives a covered grant may use the grant funds to—

(A) expand an existing training program regarding topics such as interacting with, identifying, approaching, and communicating with covered individuals that was provided to law en-

1           forcement officers by a nonprofit disability or-  
2           ganization in conjunction with the partner  
3           academy or a partner agency before the eligible  
4           entity received the grant;

5                 (B) reimburse staff members of the eligible  
6           entity for mileage and travel time expended to  
7           attend an initial training program or refresher  
8           training program occurring in person or online;

9                 (C) develop a model of training that uti-  
10          lizes volunteer instructors, except that the eligi-  
11          ble entity shall pay any instructor, including a  
12          guest instructor, who is a covered individual;

13                 (D) acquire a computer system or software  
14          needed for the training programs; or

15                 (E) support the paid participation of indi-  
16          viduals with disabilities and their family mem-  
17          bers as advisors.

18                 (e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—An eligible enti-  
19          ty that receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds  
20          to supplement, and not supplant, any funds that would,  
21          in the absence of the grant funds, be made available from  
22          a State, political subdivision of a State, or Indian Tribe  
23          for the activities described in subsection (d).

24                 (f) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

1                     (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that re-  
2 ceives a covered grant shall establish an advisory  
3 council composed of 15 members to advise the eligi-  
4 ble entity on activities carried out using the grant.

5                     (2) MEMBERSHIP.—An advisory council estab-  
6 lished under paragraph (1) shall—

7                         (A) be composed of—

8                             (i) 1 representative of the eligible en-  
9 tity who is a covered individual and shall  
10 serve as chair of the advisory council;

11                             (ii) 1 representative of the State law  
12 enforcement training academy or law en-  
13 forcement agency for the State that the eli-  
14 gible entity serves, who shall serve as vice  
15 chair of the advisory council;

16                             (iii) 3 representatives of community-  
17 based organizations that support individ-  
18 uals with disabilities, not fewer than 2 of  
19 whom have a disability;

20                             (iv) 2 representatives of community-  
21 based organizations that support older  
22 adults;

23                             (v) 2 State officials or their designees;

24                             (vi) 1 representative of an organiza-  
25 tion providing victim services;

3 (viii) 3 members of the public with  
4 knowledge of individuals with disabilities  
5 and older adults with cognitive impair-  
6 ment, including not fewer than 2 self-advo-  
7 cates or family members of a covered indi-  
8 vidual; and

9 (ix) 1 active local or State law en-  
10 forcement officer representing a labor or  
11 representative organization; and

12 (B) include a majority of representation  
13 from racial and ethnic minority communities.

21 (B) provide the advisory council with rec-  
22 ommendations for the sustainability and expan-  
23 sion of the training programs, such as the de-  
24 velopment of a train-the-trainer model.

**25 (g) ANNUAL REPORT.—**

1                     (1) REPORT TO SECRETARY BY ELIGIBLE ENTI-  
2 TIES.—Not later than 1 year after receiving a cov-  
3 ered grant, and each year thereafter for the duration  
4 of the grant period, an eligible entity that receives  
5 a covered grant shall submit the following informa-  
6 tion to the Secretary with respect to the preceding  
7 year:

8                     (A) The number of individuals who bene-  
9 fited from the training programs provided by  
10 the eligible entity using grant funds, includ-  
11 ing—

12                         (i) the number of individuals who  
13 were trained through the training pro-  
14 grams, including the total number of new  
15 law enforcement officers who participated  
16 in the initial training program and existing  
17 law enforcement officers who participated  
18 in the refresher training program; and

19                         (ii) the estimated number of individ-  
20 uals who were impacted by the training  
21 programs.

22                     (B) Demographic data, including age, sex,  
23 and race, for the law enforcement officers who  
24 received the training.

(C) The number of partner agencies that participated in the training programs.

7 (E) Any recommendations for improving  
8 the grant program carried out under this Act.

9 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE ATTORNEY

GENERAL BY THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a report on the grant program carried out under this Act, with respect to the preceding year, to—

15 (A) the Attorney General;

(C) the Committee on Appropriations of  
the Senate;

(E) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

## 1       (h) EVALUATION.—

2                 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use not  
3                 more than 2 percent of the amounts made available  
4                 under section 6 for administrative purposes and for  
5                 an evaluation of the grant program carried out  
6                 under this Act.

7                 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR.—The Secretary  
8                 shall enter into a contract with a third-party entity  
9                 that is unrelated to any recipient of a covered grant  
10                 to carry out the evaluation under paragraph (1).

11                 (3) CONTENTS.—In carrying out the evaluation  
12                 under paragraph (1), the third-party entity con-  
13                 tracted under paragraph (2) shall report to the Sec-  
14                 retary and the Attorney General on—

15                         (A) the demographic characteristics of the  
16                 population served by the training conducted by  
17                 eligible entities using covered grants; and

18                         (B) any change in the occurrence of vio-  
19                 lence in the communities served by training de-  
20                 scribed in subparagraph (A).

21   **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22                 There is authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000  
23                 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025 to carry out  
24                 this Act.

